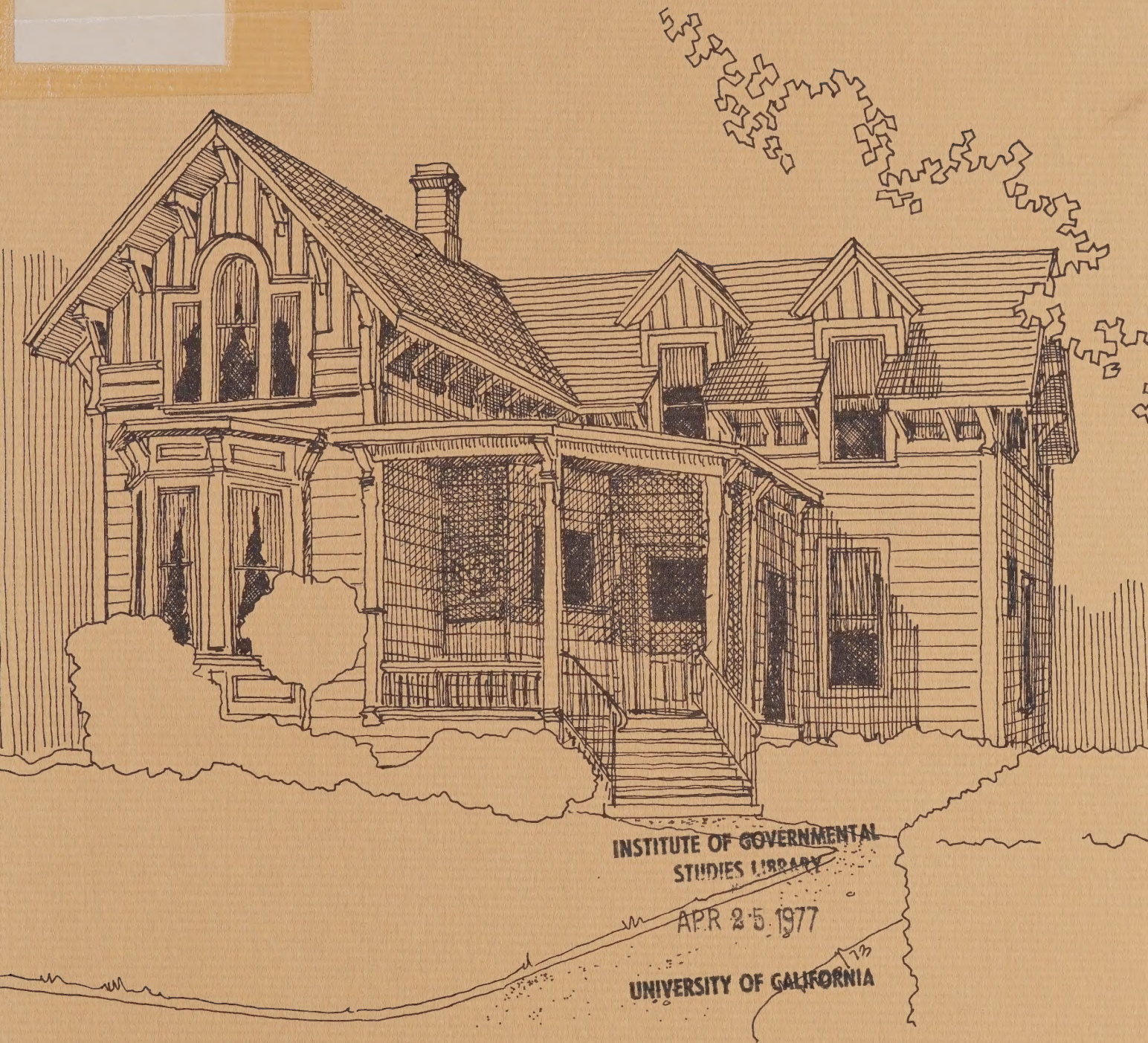


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PHASE THREE HOUSING ELEMENT

City of Alameda

CITY OF ALAMEDA

HOUSING ELEMENT

PHASE III

HOUSING PROBLEMS AND POLICIES

Alameda, CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MARCH 1976

ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL, MARCH 16, 1976

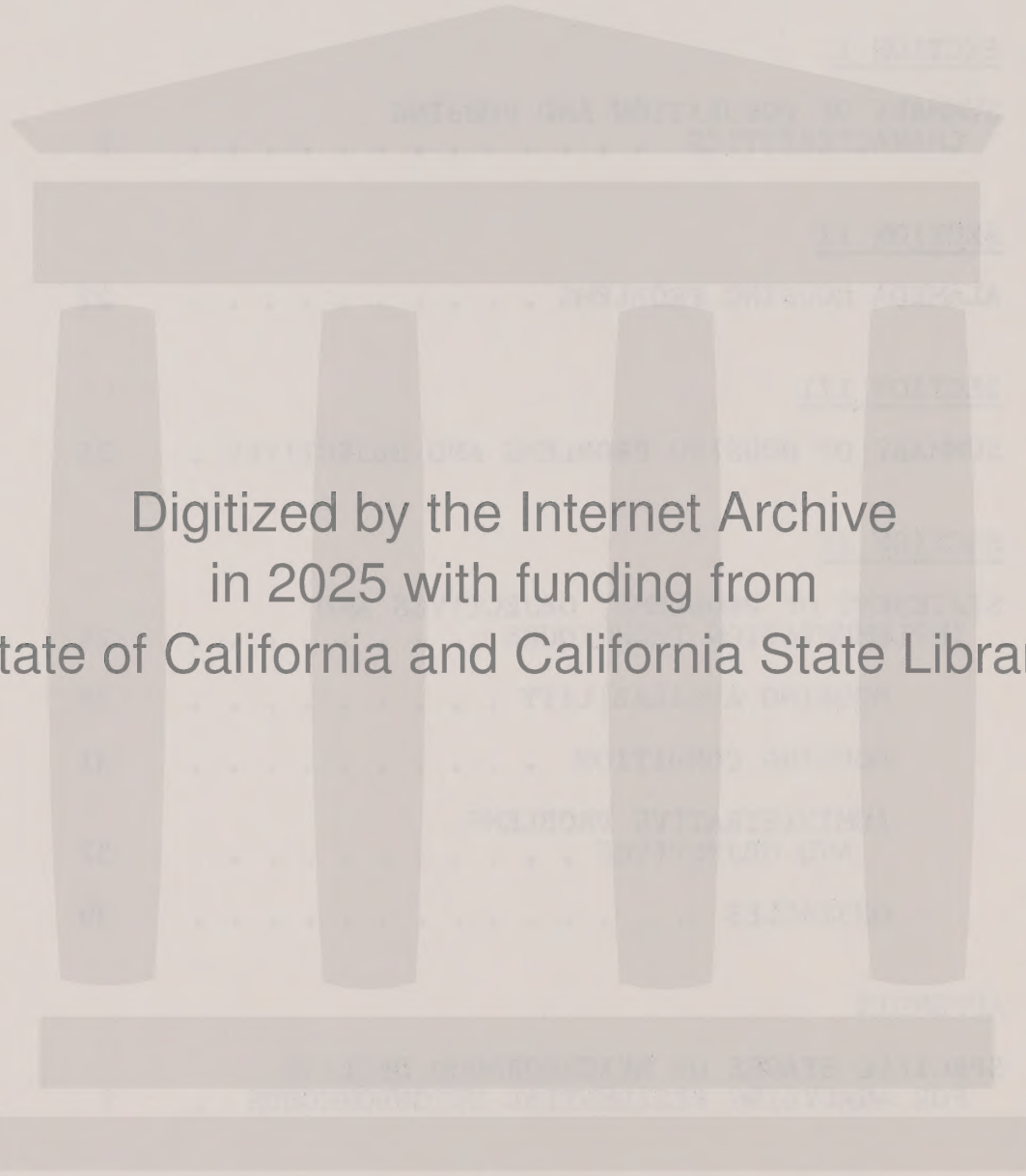
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INTRODUCTION

This third and final phase of the Housing Element contains a set of goals and solutions for the problems identified in Phases I and II. Some of the situations revealed by these reports have causes beyond the sphere of housing policy; similarly, many legitimate housing policy issues in Alameda may be more amenable to regional or state action than to local control. Nevertheless, the Housing Element can provide positive local controls over the housing situation now and in the future.

The goals and strategies detailed in this phase are a combination of staff analysis of the housing situation and findings of the Housing and Physical Planning Task Force of Alameda's Community Goals Study. The report is divided into four sections. Section I provides a summary of Alameda's housing and population characteristics as identified in Phases I and II. Sections II, III and IV detail Alameda's specific problems and related goals and policies for their alleviation.

SECTION I
SUMMARY OF POPULATION AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Population Characteristics

Alameda experienced considerable change in population composition between 1960 and 1970. There was an overall increase of 11% in the total population but this was far from uniform for all population sub-groups. The total non-white population increased by 37% over the ten-year period, with significant increases in Spanish Heritage and "Other Specified Race" groups (primarily Filipinos in Alameda). However, during the same period, the Black population declined from 4.9% to 2.6%. These three ethnic groups tended to have lower median family incomes, lower educational attainments and greater percentages in poverty than the total population. However, for both Spanish Heritage and "Other Specified Race" groups, there were elements of the population that had income and educational characteristics similar to those of the entire population. This was not true of the Black population, who had the lowest median incomes and were generally the most disadvantaged group in the City. All three groups tended to be concentrated on Alameda's north side, the trend being most pronounced among the Black population. In addition, the housing need problems of all three groups tended to be concentrated in the rental sector. The north side was an area of relatively low-cost housing in 1970 and the ethnic concentrations revealed may have been due to lower income groups seeking accommodation they could afford. However, it is possible that racial discrimination also played a role in the situation, since Phase I indicated extremely high concentrations of minorities on the north side, too high to attribute to economic causes alone.

Alameda's age structure was very similar to that of the SMSA in 1970. It exhibited most of the characteristics of an inner-city community, with relatively fewer people in the younger age groups as compared to younger suburban communities like Fremont. However, Alameda was not an old community in 1970; fully 60% of the population were 34 years or younger and only 8.7% were 65 and over - a smaller proportion than either Alameda County or the SMSA. Between 1960 and 1970 there was a slight increase in the proportion of

elderly people and a corresponding decrease in people aged between 15 and 24. By area, the greatest concentrations of young people were found in the north side and on Bay Farm Island, while people 65 years and older tended to be concentrated in the east end and some south shore and central area tracts.

Between 1960 and 1970 there was a decline in household sizes in Alameda from 2.9 to 2.7 persons per household. Despite this trend, Alameda still had a majority of husband-wife households in 1970; however, there was a decline in the number of families with school-age children and an increase in primary individual households between 1960 and 1970. Husband-wife families also tended to be concentrated in the east end and central areas, primary individuals in central and south shore areas, and families with children on the north side.

Education

Education levels in Alameda were similar to the Metropolitan Area profiles. In 1970 Alamedans averaged 12.4 years of schooling, slightly less than the 12.5 years median for the SMSA. Compared to the Metropolitan Area, more Alamedans tended to complete high school but fewer completed four years of college. As already noted, ethnic minorities tended to have lower median school years than the total population. The east end, Bay Farm Island, and the south shore area had the highest levels of educational attainment, while the north side had the lowest achievement levels.

Employment

In 1970 Alameda had a higher level of labor force participation and a lower level of unemployment than either Alameda County or the Metropolitan Area. Ethnic groups tended to have higher male and lower female labor force participation rates than the aggregate population. Only the north side and the west end exhibited any significant differences in labor force participation by area. This appeared to be due to above average levels of unemployment and the concentrations of minorities and publicly assisted housing in these areas.

Alamedans had a larger percentage of lower paying clerical jobs and a smaller proportion of professionals than either Alameda County or the SMSA in 1970. Over 27% of Alameda's labor force was classed as clerical in 1970, compared to 23% in the Metropolitan Area. The west end, north side, and central areas tended to have the largest concentrations of people in these lower paying jobs, while the east end, south shore area, and Bay Farm Island had the largest concentration of people in professional and technical jobs. The majority of these people worked inside Alameda County, with 26% employed in Oakland and only 10% commuting to San Francisco.

Incomes in Alameda also reflect the occupational structure just discussed. In 1970 the median family income was \$10,674, below the Metropolitan Area figure of \$11,801. The median income for unrelated individuals was \$3,199 in 1970, the lowest figure of any group, and lower than the comparable data for Alameda County and the SMSA. This again reflects the relatively large proportion of Alameda's work force employed in the lower paying job classifications. As with all the indicators discussed so far, ethnic groups tended to have lower incomes and therefore higher numbers of people in poverty than the total population. Alameda's total percentage of families below the poverty line was higher than the figure for Alameda County or the Metropolitan Area, yet there were proportionally fewer people who applied for some form of public assistance in 1970. Incomes tended to be highest in the east end, the south shore area, and on Bay Farm Island, and lowest on the north side. Closely related to this, families and unrelated individuals in poverty tended to be grouped on the north side; and central and north side areas had the highest percentages of people on some form of public welfare.

Housing Characteristics

Alameda's housing stock increased by 35% between 1960-1970 and by a further 8% between 1970-1974. Over 73% of the dwellings built between 1960 and 1974 were multiple-unit buildings, a majority containing five or more units. Over the same period there was a decline in the numbers of single-family houses, both as a proportion of the total stock and in absolute numbers. This trend in new construction resulted in an owner-renter ratio of 40:60 in 1970, a larger renter propor-

tion than either Alameda County or the Metropolitan Area. By 1974 the rental stock had increased to approximately 65% of Alameda's housing stock. The only areas that had a majority of owner-occupied units in 1970 were in the east end, Bay Farm Island, and parts of the south shore. The remainder of the City was dominated by rental units. However, this does not mean that rental units can be directly equated with multiple-dwelling units. In 1970 Alameda still had 52% of its housing units in single-family or duplex structures, areas like the east end and Bay Farm Island being almost exclusively developed in one and two-unit structures. In contrast, some of the central areas of the City had over 75% of the dwelling units in multiple-unit buildings. Clearly, therefore, there were numerous single-family houses converted to multiple-residential use, as well as owner-occupied units located in multiple-unit buildings within Alameda in 1970.

Housing Age

Alameda's housing stock was older than the Metropolitan Area's in 1970; more than 47% of the City's stock was 30 years old or more. These old units tended to be concentrated in the north side, the east end, and parts of the west end and central areas. The age of these units is significant in that most of them require substantial levels of maintenance investment to meet current code requirements and to prevent rapid deterioration.

Mobility

Between 1968 and 1970 Alameda had a much higher rate of people changing residence than either Alameda County or the SMSA. Historically, the Naval Air Station has caused inflation in this factor, but this is unlikely to account for the recent acceleration in the trend, since the numbers of naval personnel have been declining in recent years. Over 88% of all the people who moved between 1968-70 were renters. It is therefore probable that the increase in turnover is related to the rapid increase in the rental stock. The most stable areas of the City, in terms of population turnover, were the east end and some central area tracts.

Household Size

The median number of persons per dwelling unit in Alameda, 2.3, was very similar to the figures for both Alameda County and the Metropolitan Area. Alameda tended to have fewer people per owner-occupied dwelling and more people per renter-occupied dwelling than either Alameda County or the SMSA. This revealed a concentration of overcrowding in the rental sector, further aggravated by the generally smaller size of rental units. Owner-occupied household sizes were uniform throughout the City, with only areas of the south shore exhibiting noticeably higher household sizes. Renter-occupied household sizes tended to vary much more, dependent upon the type of single-family unit which the household occupied. Renters on Bay Farm Island had larger household sizes than comparable owner-occupiers in other single-family houses; while renters in the south shore tended to occupy smaller units than the median renter-occupied household size. Household size also gives some indication of overcrowding. Between 1960 and 1970 there was a big improvement in the level of overcrowded households in Alameda, declining from 8.6% to 5.4% of the stock. As already noted, overcrowding tended to be worse in the rental sector and was most severe in Alameda's north side area.

Basic Facilities

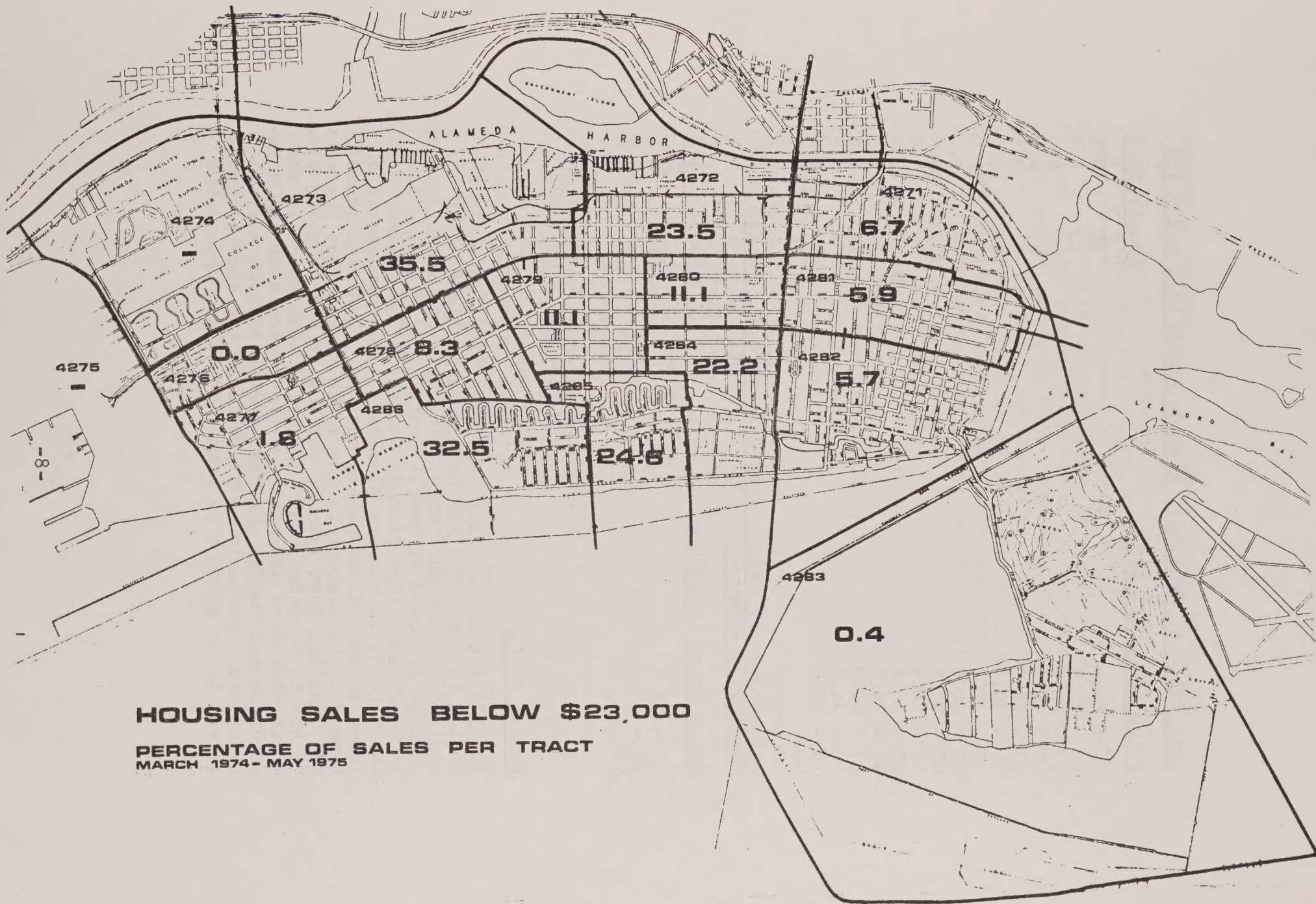
In terms of the provision of basic facilities in Alameda's housing stock, the City was better off than either Alameda County or the SMSA. Only 1.3% of the City's units lacked some or all plumbing, although this problem was most heavily concentrated in the rental sector and in the north side and central area tracts of the City. Housing units with inadequate heating sources exhibited the same basic distribution. Alameda's heating problem was slightly larger than that of Alameda County or the SMSA (22.2%), but was again concentrated in the rental sector, particularly in certain north side and central area tracts. Finally, estimates of dilapidated housing in Alameda indicated that there was a slight increase in the problem between 1960 and 1970 (from 2.1% to 2.4%), and that the problem was heavily concentrated in the rental stock.

To produce updated information on the condition of Alameda's housing, a windshield survey of housing

eyesores was conducted in 1975. This study, when compared with information for 1967, indicated that the City had a relatively minor housing condition problem. It also indicated that the number of eyesore houses had increased between 1967 and 1975, although most of them appeared to be amenable to rehabilitation input. However, it must be stressed that this type of survey is very imprecise, and that it tells nothing of the interior condition of units. The census indicated a more severe substandard housing problem in 1970 than the windshield survey and also concluded that the condition situation had worsened between 1960 and 1970.

Housing Sale Prices

In terms of the value of owner-occupied housing, Alameda was between Alameda County and the Metropolitan Area. In 1970 the median value of an owner-occupied home in Alameda was \$26,200, while for the SMSA it was \$26,900. This relationship held true for almost all value ranges, with the Metropolitan Area having larger percentages of more expensive homes than Alameda. The most valuable homes were located in the east end, Bay Farm Island, the Gold Coast, and the parts of the south shore fill occupied by single-family homes. However, because the values used by the census were self-ascribed by the homeowner, it was felt that the data might be inaccurate, as well as five years out of date. Therefore, a special study of house sale prices was conducted (see Section IV, Phase II). This study suggested that there had been a 42.9% increase in sale prices between 1970 and 1975, but that the census was accurate in defining those areas with the most expensive housing. However, it became clear that, despite the considerable increase in prices which occurred between 1970 and 1975, there were still substantial numbers of houses available at reasonable prices in most areas of the City. Information taken from deeds of sale kept by the City Assessor indicated that, for the period from March 1974 to May 1975, 22% of all units sold during the survey period were priced below \$30,000. While the greatest numbers of units in this price range were located in the north side and south shore areas, they were available throughout Alameda, as indicated on the following map. However, it should be noted that some of these lower priced units - probably all of them on the south shore - were condominiums, rather than detached houses.



HOUSING SALES BELOW \$23,000

PERCENTAGE OF SALES PER TRACT
MARCH 1974 - MAY 1975

Sale Price of Housing: Alameda March 1974 - May 1975

<u>Price Range (\$1,000)</u>	<u>Houses Sold</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Less than 20	34	3.6
20 - 22.9	23	2.4
23 - 24.9	63	6.6
25 - 26.9	59	6.2
27 - 29.9	33	3.5
30 - 34.9	126	13.2
35 - 39.9	172	18.0
40 - 44.9	179	18.7
45 - 49.9	102	10.7
50 - 54.9	50	5.2
55 - 59.9	27	2.8
60 - 64.9	31	3.3
65 - 69.9	19	2.0
70 - 74.9	8	0.8
75 - 79.9	13	1.4
80+	16	1.6

Sale Prices by Major Price Categories: Alameda
March 1974 - May 1975

<u>Price Range (\$1,000)</u>	<u>Houses Sold</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
0 - 29.9	212	22.0
30 - 59.9	629	69.0
60+	114	9.0

Source: Assessor's Deeds of Sale,
March 1974 - May 1975

Rental Costs

In 1970 the median gross rent was \$140, equal to the median for the SMSA and considerably higher than the median for Alameda County. The City had a smaller percentage of low-cost rental units (i.e., renting for \$100 or less) than Alameda County or the region, a fact which tends to obscure Alameda's large percentage of low-cost subsidized public housing. By area, rents tended to be highest in the south shore area, the east end, and Bay Farm Island, and lowest on the north side. It has to be noted that the rental statistics in the north side were depressed by the presence of the Housing Authority units and that median private market rents would probably be higher than the figures indicate. In an attempt to both specify and update the

figures developed by the census, Phase II of the Housing Element included a survey of rental costs in Alameda. The study determined that the median rent of the units contacted was \$210, which would indicate an increase of 50% between 1970 and 1975. (The figures are not strictly comparable.) Most of the units identified in the survey were two or three-bedroom apartments and it appeared that converted and duplex units offered the cheapest accommodation. This study also indicated that, although people were willing and able to pay for rental accommodation, there may have been economic and non-economic constraints applied by landlords, perhaps factors such as race, age, number of children and marital status. Unfortunately, these tenancy requirements were not quantified by the rental cost study, but the need for better information on this important issue was clearly indicated.

Overpayment

Overpayment by both owners and renters was common in 1970; 36.4% of renters overpaid in the census year, i.e., paid more than 25% of their incomes on accommodation. The groups who expended most of their incomes on accommodation were the elderly and any household type other than husband-wife couples; this was true for both owners and renters. However, when Alameda's total percentage overpaying was compared with figures for other East Bay communities, it was apparent that Alameda was better off than most of its neighbors. There was little variation in overpayment by area; however, the Fernside area, parts of the north side (Tract 4273), and part of the south shore area (Tract 4285) had rental overpayment levels below most other areas. Both the Fernside and south shore areas were high income enclaves in 1970. The relatively small proportion of the north side population overpaying was probably related to the concentration of low-income housing in the area.

Public Housing

In 1974 the City of Alameda had 1,274 subsidized/low-cost dwelling units, or approximately 5.2% of the 1970 housing stock. As the following table indicates, this gives Alameda one of the highest percentages of subsidized units in the East Bay.

Subsidized Units: Selected Alameda County Communities
1974

<u>City</u>	<u>Subsidized Units</u>	<u>1970* Total Units</u>	<u>Subsidized Units as % of Total Units</u>
Alameda	1,274	24,689	5.2**
Oakland	7,392	146,615	5.0
Berkeley	1,426	47,365	3.0
Livermore	147	11,437	1.3
Newark	80	6,801	1.2
Fremont	285	27,305	1.0
Hayward	202	28,680	0.7

Source: Inventory of Public Housing and Subsidized Moderate Income Rental Housing, Alameda County 1974; Alameda County Planning Department, January 2, 1975.

However, 83% of these units were concentrated in the north side (Tract 4273) in 1974; with the occupation of the units currently planned by the Housing Authority, this concentration will drop to 79%. The tenant occupancy estimates given by the Housing Authority and the rental agent for the Buena Vista Apartments indicate that over 40% of these low-cost units are absorbed by military personnel. This concentration of NAS personnel and the preference of others for Alameda means that any increase in the supply of low-cost housing would tend to be partially absorbed by additional Naval Air Station personnel attracted into the City.

Naval Air Station

In 1975 the Naval Air Station provided 1,213 housing units and 1,448 bachelor quarters for military personnel. However, NAS personnel estimate that each year approximately 2,000 men seek accommodation on the open market. Of those seeking accommodations in 1973, just under half actually located in Alameda, many in

* Percentages are therefore not accurate.

** This percentage includes 615 units of 221-d-3 development. With these moderate-rent units eliminated, Alameda's percentage of subsidized units drops to 2.7%. Only Oakland and Berkeley had more.

public housing as has previously been noted. Because of the eligibility requirements for NAS housing, naval personnel with the lowest incomes are the ones forced to seek accommodation on the open market, while pressure on the limited supply of NAS housing means that even those personnel who are eligible often have to wait for vacancies to occur.

Vacant Land

To assess Alameda's potential for future development, a survey of vacant land was conducted in 1975 (Phase II, Section III). This indicated that Alameda had approximately 1,193 acres of vacant land: 908 acres on the Harbor Bay Isle site; 220 acres on the Del Monte property; and 65 acres in scattered sites throughout the City, almost 35 acres of this on Bay Farm Island. This survey indicated that the two large sites were relatively expensive to build upon and that they both faced severe access problems.

In addition, portions of the Harbor Bay Isle site also experienced noise impacts from the adjacent Metropolitan Oakland International Airport. The survey also indicated that the scattered sites were fragmented and often substandard by current zoning criteria.

Vacancy Rates

A survey of housing vacancy rates was conducted, using data collected by the Postal Service for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This survey of data for 1969-1974 indicated that Alameda's total vacancy rate never exceeded 2.5% of the housing stock, below the accepted norm of 3%. This has been due to both the restricted supply of vacant land and the continuous demand generated by the Naval Air Station. Most of Alameda's vacancies have occurred within the rental stock with relatively few vacant sale units. In aggregate, Alameda's vacancy rates declined from 1969 to 1974, while those of Alameda County and the SMSA increased over the same period. Thus, while the region experienced a decline in aggregate demand, Alameda continued to be an attractive place to live.

Condominium Conversions

By 1975 fully 3.7% of Alameda's total dwelling units were condominiums. Between 1971 and 1974 the City

approved the conversion of 435 rental apartments to condominiums, over 325 of these approved in 1974. A consultant study of the process indicated that the condominium conversions already approved were both smaller and cheaper than condominium originals. Over half the people occupying these converted units were 40 years old or over and they tended to have higher incomes than the City median - \$13,000 for the City in 1973, and \$16,000 for condominium conversion owners. There was, therefore, no evidence to suggest that by 1973 condominium conversions were providing different groups with access to the owner-occupied housing market, despite their relatively lower costs. In addition, there was no information available on the financial solvency of these converted units, or the satisfaction of the owners. Until this type of data is collected, it will be impossible to evaluate the potential of the condominium conversion process in Alameda.

Housing Need

Phase Two of the Housing Element included a section on the assessment of housing need, based upon data provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This study combined three census indicators to produce the need estimates: units lacking some or all plumbing; overcrowded households; and householders paying more than they can afford. This study found that fully 23.7% of the City's households were in some form of housing need and that 90% of these households in need were renter-occupiers.

Renter-Occupiers in Inadequate Accommodation: Alameda 1970

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Non-Elderly in Housing Need</u>		<u>Elderly in Housing Need</u>		
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
1 Person	1,192	58.9	831	41.1	2,023
2 "	1,256	77.7	361	22.3	1,617
3-4 "	1,375	97.8	31	2.2	1,406
5 "	215	100.0	0	0.0	215
6+ "	314	95.7	14	4.3	328

Source: Special Census Tabulations of Owner and Renter-Occupied Units by Living Condition, 1970.

A majority of owner-occupier households in need were 65 or over, whereas over 78% of renter households in need were non-elderly. Overall, the following proportions of the population were in inadequate accommodations in 1970: 43.6% of Black renters; 41.3% of Spanish Heritage renters; 52.7% of elderly renters; and 37.6% of White renters. Unfortunately, this information was only provided at the City-wide level and cannot be used to isolate target areas within the City. However, when reviewed against the data already discussed under Phases I and II, it is possible to infer that the north side and some of the central areas contain most of the households in inadequate accommodation.

Residential Density

The housing dynamics previously discussed combine to give Alameda one of the highest residential densities in the entire Bay Area. According to Planning Department comparisons for 1975 using regional data, the City's present density of 40.7 persons per net residential acre is the third highest of any city in the five-county region, trailing only San Francisco (72.6) and Daly City (41.6). At the time of the 1970 Census, Alameda's net residential density was 39.9 persons per acre, exceeded only by San Francisco at 77.4 persons per net residential acre.

Measure A

One issue that was not directly addressed in either Phase I or Phase II was the impact of Measure A on Alameda housing. Measure A is an amendment to the City Charter, passed in June 1973, which provides that:

"There shall be no multiple dwelling units built in the City of Alameda....exception being the Alameda Housing Authority replacement of existing low cost housing units and the proposed Senior Citizens low cost housing complex...." *

* Alameda City Ordinance No. 1693, N.S., (Section 26-1), June 1, 1973.

Alameda's attempt to control growth and density is only one of a number of such attempts being tried throughout the nation. However, it can be noted that many communities have developed more flexible and creative techniques to achieve this objective than Measure A.

It was hoped to be able to specify some of the effects of the Charter Amendment through the studies included in Phase II. However, it proved impossible to isolate the specific impacts of Measure A for a variety of reasons. Section I on population density clearly indicated that Alameda had a high residential density and indicated a probable relationship between the population density and the rate of apartment construction. Section II, on housing stock changes between 1960-1974, was intended to reveal the building trends in Alameda and, as a subsidiary goal, to isolate any changes in the trend immediately before and after the imposition of Measure A. However, this proved to be impossible, principally because building trends in Alameda, Alameda County, and the Metropolitan Area were all declining for almost two years before Measure A came into effect. Thus, although Measure A obviously had an impact upon construction, insofar as it restricted all multiple-dwelling unit construction, it could not be assumed that Measure A alone caused the decline in building rates. The lag-time between the impact of economic cycles at the local, area, state, and national levels meant that by the time Measure A was passed, the prospects for local new construction were already significantly reduced. Consequently, it was impossible to separate the effects of Measure A from the more general area-wide trends that were at work.

It was hoped to be able to identify further effects of Measure A through the survey of vacant land (Section III, Phase II). This indicated that one development scheme for the Del Monte property was abandoned because of the requirements of Measure A. In addition, over six acres of land on the main island, scattered in 42 lots, were vacant in 1975; and it is a reasonable inference that the imposition of Measure A lowered the potential returns on investment for many of these lots. One of the major trends identified by the housing stock changes, the demolition of old dwellings and the construction of new apartments, has been defended by the assertion that new apartments provide an increased reservoir of low-cost rental

accommodations in the City. The Rental Cost Survey, detailed in Section V, Phase II, indicated the contrary situation; that, in fact, the retention of older converted units provided the cheapest accommodation in the City, while the newer units were more expensive. Therefore, the imposition of Measure A can be said to have preserved some of these older homes, thereby retaining a lower-cost type of accommodation within Alameda. However, this takes no cognizance of the livability of these units, some of which were converted many years ago and which are thought to be substandard by current building and housing code criteria.

Finally, it was hoped that the survey of vacancy rates (Section VI, Phase II) would indicate some of the effects of Measure A. However, an analysis of vacancy rates for the years 1969 to 1974 for Alameda, Alameda County and the Metropolitan Area proved inconclusive. While it was true that Alameda's vacancy rate had dropped from 1969 to 1974 and that vacancy rates for Alameda County and the SMSA exhibited the opposite tendency, it could not be said this was caused by Measure A. In fact, after the imposition of Measure A early in 1973, Alameda's vacancy rates began to increase, indicating the increasing availability of accommodation within Alameda, particularly rental accommodation. It therefore proved impossible to isolate either the adverse or beneficial impacts of Measure A in any rigorous fashion.

The proposals detailed in Sections III and IV of this report assume the existence of Measure A. However, most of these proposals would still be valid were Measure A to be eliminated. The removal of Measure A would tend to increase the number of policy options available for the expansion of new moderate-cost units within Alameda. In the event that Measure A is rescinded, the Housing Element would still be valid, but it should be reconsidered to determine whether any additional recommendations could be included.

Future Growth and Development

Alameda is a mature community with an existing high level of population density, an older housing stock, and little remaining vacant land. Alameda is a compact geographical area, close to employment centers in San Francisco and the East Bay, well served by public transit and utility districts capable of increased

service. Alameda is already largely residential and it would be logical to allocate a large portion of the vacant land to residential use. However, other General Plan Elements are not yet completed and therefore constraints on residential use such as noise, safety or access problems have not yet been fully analyzed. A definitive statement of how much of the vacant land is suitable for residential use cannot be made at this time. When the other elements are completed, the Housing Element can either be amended to summarize their findings and make residential land use recommendations consistent with all the other elements; or the Housing Element and the other elements can be used as input elements to the Combined Land Use/Open Space/Circulation Element, soon to be completed. The latter course is more efficient (avoids redundancy) and constitutes the present planning approach. Consistency between General Plan elements is recommended.

Population and Housing Estimates

Until the Land Use Element is complete, it will not be possible to develop definitive future population and housing estimates; and, even with future land uses determined, population growth estimates are highly sensitive to unpredictable factors and can never be regarded as completely accurate. In order to make population and housing estimates, it is necessary to define certain assumptions. However, as a practical matter, it is unlikely that all of these will ultimately be borne out.

Assumptions:

1. All remaining vacant land in the City to develop as residential use, regardless of zoning.
2. Development at maximum density allowed under Measure A: 17.5 units per acre.
3. 1970 median owner-occupied household size of 2.5 persons.
4. 1970 median renter-occupied household size of 2.2 persons.

5. 1975 median household size of 2.1 persons.
6. No change in the 1975 base population during the time to full development - particularly no changes in the NAS personnel.

According to the 1970 census, Alameda had a total population of 70,968 people. Between 1970-75 a total of 782 single-family and 1,938 multi-family units were constructed. With the above assumptions, these units would house 5,500 people. This would give Alameda an estimated 1975 population of 76,500.

In 1975, there were 1,193 acres of vacant land in the City. At 17.5 units per acre these vacant acres would hold 20,800 units or approximately 43,500 people. This could theoretically give Alameda a population of 120,000, although the actual number would probably be somewhat less, since development rarely occurs to the absolute maximum permitted by zoning. The issue of population and other growth will be considered in detail in the Land Use Element.

Relationship with the Regional and State Housing Elements

It was noted in the introduction to Phase III that many local housing policy issues need to be considered at the regional and state levels. To address these issues, regional and state agencies are in the process of completing housing elements.

Regional Policies

Phase I of the Regional Housing Element was adopted by the Association of Bay Area Governments in August 1975. This document defined three general goals, designed to meet the housing needs of the Bay Area. These are to:

1. Maximize free choice in housing throughout the region;
2. Conserve the existing supply in accordance with the region's needs; and,
3. Expand the housing supply in accordance with the region's housing needs.

From these broad goals, four objectives are derived for the specific guidance of housing policy in the region. These are:

1. To have regional housing policies adopted by ABAG and by member counties and cities, as a basis for allocating the region's housing subsidies.

The regional housing allocation policy is designed to express a commitment by local governments to the concept that they all share the responsibility to fill the region's housing needs. Alameda's Housing Element suggested mechanisms for the preservation and expansion of the housing stock available to low and moderate-income households, as well as addressing the housing needs of other groups in the City.

2. To have every county and municipal government in the region adopt a housing element which specifies the strategies and actions to be initiated by local government to meet housing needs.

Alameda's draft Housing Element is explicit in its definitions of the City's housing problems and related objectives and implementation techniques. This second regional objective will be satisfied when the Housing Element is adopted.

3. To direct growth management efforts of regional and local bodies toward the expansion and conservation of housing in accord with the region's needs, and especially housing for low and moderate-income people.

Alameda's draft Housing Element has, as two of its major concerns, the preservation and expansion of housing suitable for low and moderate-income people, and the conservation of older houses. These two objectives are mutually supportive since Alameda's older houses provide a reservoir of low-cost rental accommodation in the City (Sections A.1.a-d and B.1-4).

4. To eliminate from the housing market all arbitrary discrimination based on race or ethnic origin, sex, marital status or household composition.

Alameda's Housing Element seeks to eliminate all forms of housing discrimination by providing information on aid to tenants and other groups in need; by using the apartment licensing procedure to ensure that landlords are aware of what they can and cannot stipulate in tenancy agreements; and by examining the nature and extent of discrimination in Alameda (Sections A.4. a-e). These regional goals and objectives will be used to assess the consistency of local and regional plans. The objectives and implementation techniques detailed in Alameda's Housing Element are in conformance with the goals and objectives of Phase I of the Regional Housing Element.

State Policies

The Phase III review draft of the California Statewide Housing Element contains policy recommendations stemming from the needs analysis contained in Phases I and II. The document received public hearings in August and September 1975, and at the time of writing, February 1976, was still undergoing revision. The Phase III report will not be published as a separate document, but will be incorporated with a Statewide Housing Plan. It is therefore not possible to determine which of the 36 recommendations will be finally adopted; nor is it possible here to list all 36 recommendations, some of which have many components. The recommendations were reviewed for conformance with the goals and objectives developed by the Alameda Housing Element. There appear to be no conflicts between the two documents. Generally the State's objectives both complement and supplement the intentions of the City's Housing Element.

The following recommendations are some of the ways in which the Statewide Housing Element seeks to strengthen local planning efforts:

- Requiring local Housing Elements.
- Strengthening local powers of land acquisition and use.
- Encouraging the conservation of the existing stock.

- Supporting the use of Housing Code enforcement programs and expanding the powers of local authorities to cause repair of property.
- Changing the property tax structure to increase the incentives to improve property.
- Encouraging Savings and Loans and other private lenders to increase the availability of rehabilitation and refinancing loans in deteriorated areas.
- Emphasizing the rate of homeownership formation, and structuring local policies to encourage increased homeownership.
- Encouraging condominium and cooperative home-owning by facilitating conversion of existing rental multi-unit properties to cooperatives or condominiums.

SECTION II

ALAMEDA HOUSING PROBLEMS

The data collection sections of the Housing Element, Phases I and II, identify the characteristics of Alameda's housing stock and its extant problems. The following sections relate the problems to objectives and implementation techniques.

It is important to emphasize that Alameda's housing problems are not severe when judged against those of other centrally located urban communities. A study conducted by the Center for Urban Policy Research has suggested a five-fold scale of neighborhood decline, from one - healthy and viable residential neighborhoods to five - non-viable and heavily abandoned areas.* On this scale, the very worst of Alameda's neighborhoods falls at or just below stage two, deterioration and beginning decline (see Appendix I for details of specific stages). In absolute terms, therefore, Alameda has a sound housing stock. However, this perspective must not obscure the important fact that, using this taxonomy of neighborhood decline, most of Alameda west of High Street and north of the lagoons can be classified as entering the stage of deterioration and decline. Simply stated, Alameda has no major problems now, but, if action is delayed, major problems may emerge in the next 10-25 years. The policy maker is therefore faced with a situation where action or inaction now may have impacts into the next generation. Similarly, existing problems will have their roots in the past and will probably be resistant to short-term solutions. An understanding of these constraints is imperative for the success of housing policies.

* George Sternlieb and James Hughes, Analysis of Neighborhood Decline in Urban Areas, Rutgers Center for Urban Policy Research, June 1974, pp. xiii-iv. This taxonomy was used in a nationwide survey of redevelopment processes funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Notwithstanding Alameda's image as a relatively affluent residential community, the information in Phases I and II indicated that this was not the case. Because of the low incomes of many Alamedans in 1970, housing in the City was relatively expensive. Phases I and II indicated that large proportions of the population overpaid for accommodations and that this was especially true of renter-occupiers. Overcrowding and overpayment were particularly severe among people with low incomes and minority groups, and these problems tended to be concentrated on the north side. The private market provided little flexibility in unit sizes and was unable to offer rented accommodation at low cost. There was a higher percentage of public housing in Alameda in 1970, but it was concentrated in one area, and a substantial proportion of the units were absorbed by military personnel. This housing availability problem is currently and potentially more severe than the housing condition problem.

Phases I and II indicated that Alameda has a housing condition problem, particularly in the rental sector. The general condition problem can be related to the functional obsolescence of many structures due to age and inadequate maintenance investment.*

In the rental sector, the high demand situation has led to the conversion of single-unit structures and has meant that units are occupied, irrespective of condition. Inadequate local control has resulted in a housing stock dominated by rental units and has caused a rapid increase in the number of multi-unit buildings. This, in turn, has caused high residential densities throughout most of the City, and an unfortunate mix of single and multi-unit buildings in some areas that has tended to depress the potential for maintenance investment. There are, therefore, many components to the housing condition problem, each with its own sets of related objectives and implementation techniques.

- * Functional obsolescence exists when a house no longer meets current standards to habitability - for example, substandard lots, inadequate wiring or substandard foundations would be evidence of functional obsolescence. Many such inadequacies can be remedied by increased maintenance investment, although some would require major structural improvements.

In conclusion, Alameda can be characterized as a low to moderate-income working class community with a limited supply of vacant land and a high demand for housing. This has caused a rapid increase in housing costs since 1970 which has created current and potential housing availability problems. It is therefore unlikely that, in Alameda, the private market can provide new housing for low or moderate-income groups. The age of the housing stock, and other factors, have contributed to the deteriorated condition of many structures. Housing policies should, therefore, seek to address these issues of housing availability and housing condition.

SECTION III
SUMMARY OF HOUSING PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES

The California State Guidelines (Government Code Section 65301(c)) identify four general goals of housing elements. These are:

1. To promote and ensure the provision of adequate housing for all persons, regardless of income, age, race, sex or ethnic background.
2. To promote and ensure the provision of housing selection by location, type, price and tenure.
3. To promote and ensure open and free choice of housing for all.
4. To act as a guide for municipal decisions and have these decisions affect the quality of the housing stock and inventory.

These are accepted as umbrella goals of Alameda's Housing Element. Specific objectives and alternative implementation techniques are developed from the generic problems identified in Phases I and II. These are summarized below:

A. Alameda Has an Existing and Potential Housing Availability Problem.

1. To increase the supply of low and moderate-income renter and owner-occupied properties of all unit sizes, the City will encourage low and moderate income housing development.
2. To alleviate the concentration of low-income subsidized units, the City will support a policy of dispersal of these units.
3. To alleviate the housing pressure produced by the Naval Air Station, the City will cooperate with the NAS on ways to address this issue.
4. To alleviate current and prevent future forms of discrimination, the City will direct aid to those groups most in need of assistance.

B. Alameda Has an Existing and Potential Housing Condition Problem.

1. To ensure an improvement in housing conditions, a code enforcement program is required.
2. To stimulate private investment in the improvement of the housing stock, a system of public investments in the housing market is required.
3. To provide a better balance between owners and renters, and to reduce the chances for neighborhood decline, the City will encourage the expansion of the owner-occupied housing stock and the retention of existing single units.
4. To stimulate landlords to improve their property, the City will strengthen its controls over rental properties.

C. Administrative Problems and Objectives.

1. To facilitate inter-governmental coordination, the City will encourage the further establishment of contacts with other involved agencies.
2. To facilitate inter-agency coordination, all elements of local housing policy will be brought directly under the aegis of the City Council.
3. To facilitate citizen participation in housing planning, all involved persons should be kept informed of progress towards these goals and objectives, and a two-year printed update, to document changes and reflect new plans, should be provided.
4. While the Housing Element and associated EIR are receiving state and regional review, public hearings will be held on the Phase III policy proposals. When regional and state review is completed in January, citizen input and the other responses will be used in the revision of the Element before final public hearings, Council certification of the EIR, and adoption of the Housing Element.

5. To avoid and resolve any conflicts between General Plan Elements, the City will regularly review pertinent elements for correlation of objectives.
6. To facilitate regular review of the Housing Element, the various sources of housing data within the City will be codified and made available to the general public on a regular basis.
7. To provide a sounder information base for HCDA planning,* and updating of the Housing Element, new data should be generated by a mid-decade census.

D. Obstacles to the Achievement of these Objectives.

1. There has been little control over the housing market in the past and these suggestions may therefore elicit considerable resistance.
2. Measure A imposes a constraint upon the possible alternative forms of implementation techniques. However, to maximize the effectiveness of the Housing Element, some other form of land use control is necessary.
3. Alameda has a restricted supply of vacant land for new construction, and its potential for growth is therefore limited.
4. Existing open space is either fragmented or expensive to build upon.
5. Existing houses and sites are expensive, with costs running ahead of rising real incomes. Without public action, adequate housing for the low and moderate-income household in Alameda will be reduced.

* Housing and Community Development Act 1974.

SECTION IV
STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS, OBJECTIVES AND
IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES

A. ALAMEDA HAS AN EXISTING AND POTENTIAL HOUSING
AVAILABILITY PROBLEM.

1. To increase the supply of low and moderate-
income renter and owner-occupied properties
of all unit sizes, the City will encourage
this type of development. This can be done
by:
 - a. The City seeking federal or state funding for cooperative forms of housing in Alameda. The City can further assist this process by offering leases on City-owned property. This form of housing can either be owned or rented and should provide a variety of unit sizes, particularly the larger sizes.
 - b. Creative use of Section 8 funding to supplement rental payments for all types of households. The advantage of this payment normally accrues to the landlord, and is therefore best used in conjunction with the cooperative housing scheme.
 - c. The City sponsoring a study to examine the potential for the conversion of large, older houses to condominium ownership. These should offer cheaper owned units than are provided by new construction.
 - d. The City designating portions of its excess property for low and moderate-cost housing. Currently (February 1976), there are no federal funds specifically designed for the construction of new low-cost housing. However, this land could possibly be used:
 - as a location for houses designated for demolition. These

could be operated by the Housing Authority and rented to low-income families.

- by charitable groups who seek construction sites for housing for disadvantaged people.
- for the construction of units by the Housing Authority.
- for temporary purposes until either federal or state funds became available for the construction of new low-income units.

These options should be considered for any and all vacant City land as it becomes available, consistent with overall land use planning.

2. To alleviate the concentration of low-income, subsidized units, the City will establish a policy of dispersal of these units. This can be done by:

- a. Examining the potential sale of Makassar Strait Village to an interested party. The money from this sale could be used to purchase other scattered site rental units within Alameda, or construct or purchase an equal number of units elsewhere.*
- b. Utilizing Section 8 and other funds to finance new construction or rehabilitation in scattered areas of the City.
- c. Leasing of units to the Housing Authority acquired through the housing rehabilitation program.
- d. Encouraging the development of units of different size and price in all new developments.

* This would require a referendum under Article 34 of the State Constitution.

3. To alleviate the housing pressure produced by the Naval Air Station, the City will cooperate with the NAS on ways to address this issue.
This can be done by:
- a. Beginning discussions with the NAS over the possibilities of an increased housing commitment on their part.
 - b. Investigate the possibilities of using NAS land to construct low and moderate-income housing. This type of development would possibly be eligible for loans through the newly created State Housing Finance Agency.
4. To alleviate current, and prevent future, forms of discrimination, the City will direct aid to those groups most in need of assistance.
This can be done by:
- a. Using the apartment licensing procedure to ensure that landlords are aware of what they can and cannot stipulate in leases and tenancy agreements by providing them with a brochure containing this information. In addition, applicants whose leases contain illegal provisions should not get the license.
 - b. The specification of some mechanism to receive complaints relating to all forms of illegal discrimination within the City, and referral to appropriate agencies for investigation.
 - c. Advertising the availability of aid to tenants, landlords, minorities, and any groups in need. A brochure specifying the rights and obligations of the tenant and landlord, and sources of aid, should be made available for distribution.
 - d. Studying the nature and extent of racial discrimination and other forms of non-economic selection in the availability of accommodation. Particular

emphasis should be paid to the availability of rental accommodation for families with children, single parent households, and other household forms.

- e. Making federal and local assistance available in target areas, with particular preference given to those groups identified as being most in need.

B. ALAMEDA HAS AN EXISTING AND POTENTIAL HOUSING CONDITION PROBLEM.

- 1. To ensure an improvement in housing condition, and the conservation of existing dwellings, a Code Enforcement program is required.

The Uniform Housing Code is the ordinance applicable to existing residential structures. Its purpose is to provide minimum requirements for the protection of life, limb, health, property, safety and welfare of the general public and the owners and occupants of residential buildings. This code is concerned with the designation of dwellings as standard/substandard. Among the items considered are:

- a. Inadequate Sanitation, such as lack of hot and cold running water, lack of adequate heating, dampness of habitable rooms.
- b. Structural Hazards, such as deteriorated foundations and floors, walls or ceilings that sag, split or buckle.
- c. Hazardous Wiring.
- d. Hazardous Plumbing.
- e. Hazardous Mechanical Equipment.
- f. Faulty Weather Protection.
- g. Fire Hazard and others (see Uniform Housing Code, pages 22-24).

The principal emphases of the Housing Code are on the identification and removal of hazards to the health and safety of occupants, and the encouragement of the conservation of existing houses. This does not mean that a Victorian house with brick foundations and knob and tube wiring is necessarily substandard; nor, that deficiencies in the foundation require the complete renewal of the foundations. The State Health and Safety Code states:

" . . . a condition which would require displacement of sound walls or ceilings to meet height, length or width requirements for ceilings, rooms and dwelling units shall not by itself be considered sufficient existence of dangerous conditions making a building a substandard building." (Section 17920(f))

and

"Any wiring, plumbing, or mechanical equipment, including vents, shall be deemed to have conformed to applicable law in effect at the time of installation and to have been maintained in good condition if currently in good and safe condition and working properly."
(Section 17920(f))

In addition, Section 17958.8 of the Health and Safety Code states:

"Local ordinances or regulations governing alterations and repair of existing buildings shall, after July 1976, permit the replacement, retention and extension of original materials and the use of original methods of construction, as long as the . . . dwelling . . . does not become or continue to be a substandard building."

Since many of Alameda's houses were constructed before the development of building and housing codes, the only criteria which can be applied to them are ones of health and safety; and the State Health and Safety Code

specifically endorses the replacement of original materials and the use of original methods of construction. Thus, the rationale for systematic housing safety inspections is the removal of health and safety hazards, both to the occupants of the building and neighboring structures, and to pedestrians.

Alameda has not yet adopted the Uniform Housing Code, relying instead upon the Alameda County Health Department to enforce its requirements. The State Health and Safety Code now makes adoption and enforcement of the Housing Code mandatory. The Housing Element therefore advocates:

- a. That the City adopt the Uniform Housing Code.
- b. That Alameda hire or train housing inspectors to implement the Housing Code.
- c. That the City advertise the availability of optional housing inspections at the time of sale, a service already available.
- d. The application of Sections 17299 and 24436.5 of the California Revenue and Taxation Code to substandard rental properties. This would prevent a landlord with a substandard building from claiming state tax deductions for taxes, depreciation, amortization or interest expenses connected with the property as long as it remains substandard.
- e. A phased program of systematic housing safety inspections, with initial emphasis given to the north side target area, as defined in Alameda's Community Development Application.

2. To stimulate private investment in the housing stock, a system of public investment in the housing stock is required. This can be done by:

- a. Using Community Development Block Grant funds to guarantee rehabilitation loans from one or more private lenders. Thus, money deposited with a local bank, or a consortium of banks, would be used as insurance for a larger fund which the banks would set aside to finance rehabilitation loans.
- b. Possibly using funds provided by the newly created Housing Finance Agency. The potential of this source for rehabilitation loans in Alameda is not yet clear.
- c. Using Community Development Funds to purchase deteriorated properties. These units could be either leased to the Housing Authority for use by people of low and moderate income or sold to individuals or groups for some form of private housing. Profits accruing from the sale would be returned to the rehabilitation fund. This latter alternative would require the establishment of a Redevelopment Agency. (Under Alameda's City Charter, actions by a Redevelopment Agency require voter approval.*)
- d. Establishing a system of rehabilitation grants in those cases where minor repairs do not warrant seeking loans. This would cover some proportion of the owner's estimated costs on a reimbursement basis.
- e. Giving priority to those neighborhoods of the City specified as target areas. Thus, the guaranteed rehabilitation loan fund would include a high risk, lower-than-market interest rate fund

* Only when state or federally funded.

for people in the target area; it would also focus rehabilitation grants in this area and could be advertised by, and integrated with, the Planning Department's area planning program.

f. Seeking out all sources of new construction financing:

- Section 8 of the Housing and Community Development Act which provides rent supplements for new construction and existing units, and permits the expansion of leased housing programs.
- State Finance Agency which gives loans for new construction and rehabilitation.
- Private foundations which sometime provide new construction financing. The City should examine the possibilities of using such funding to aid the development of rental or owned cooperatives, occupying City land on a deferred payment basis. The project would be possible even with Measure A.
- Section 312 rehabilitation loans, if Congress appropriates funds for 1976.
- Marks-Foran Residential Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which permits the issuance of local bonds to finance housing rehabilitation.

3. To provide a better balance between owners and renters, and to reduce the chances for neighborhood decline, the City will encourage the expansion of the owner-occupied housing stock and the retention of existing units.
This can be done by:

- a. Encouraging alternative forms of housing tenure in Alameda. The potential for the conversion of large older houses to condominium ownership should be examined. (This is part of the Planning Department's Program Design

for 1977-78 but should be advanced.)

- b. Undertake a study to examine the potential of owned and rented housing cooperatives. This form of housing would provide accommodation for people of low to moderate incomes, in addition to that provided by the Housing Authority.
- c. Strengthening demolition permit requirements. The demolition of single units should require a major variance from the Planning Board. A minimum 90-day waiting period should be specified to allow tenants to find relocation housing and to give the City the opportunity to find an alternate location for the house.

4. To stimulate landlords to improve their property, the City will strengthen its controls over rental properties.
This can be done by:

- a. Changing the licensing ordinance from a revenue to a regulatory device so that rented units are licensed on a per-unit basis, this license to cover all rented properties whether the owner lives on the premises or not. In the case of single units converted to multiple renter-occupancy, licenses should only be granted upon submission of an inspection report by the Fire and Building Departments, and evidence of compliance with findings. Existing units should be given provisional licenses until inspected.
- b. Utilizing the recently authorized substandard housing provisions of the State Franchise Tax Law. The City should inform landlords of the necessity to bring their properties up to code. Failure to do so within six months enables the City to notify the State, who will then withhold landlords' tax exemptions and deductions until evidence of compliance is produced.

- c. Providing technical assistance to tenants who wish to form cooperatives. Such assistance might include referral and assistance with private lenders.

C. ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES

These objectives and methods of implementation fulfill the intent of the housing goals developed by the State Guidelines and those specified by Alameda's Community Goals Study. Beyond these measures, which have been developed from the problems identified in Phases I and II, there are some general objectives which relate to the administrative mechanisms established by the City, and the levels of coordination and participation adopted. These are:

1. To facilitate inter-governmental coordination, the City will encourage the further establishment of contacts with other involved agencies. This procedure was followed for Phases I and II.
2. To facilitate inter-agency coordination, all elements of local housing policy will be brought directly under the aegis of the City Council.
3. To facilitate citizen participation in housing planning, all involved persons will be kept informed of progress toward these goals and objectives, and a two-year printed up-date to document changes and reflect new plans will be provided.
4. While the Housing Element and associated EIR are receiving state and regional review, public hearings will be held on the Phase III policy proposals. When the regional and state review is completed in January, citizen input and the State's response can be used in the revision of the Element, before final public hearings, Council certification of the EIR, and adoption of the Housing Element.

5. To provide proper correlation between the Housing Element and other elements of the General Plan, goals and objectives of the Housing Element that affect land use and development controls will be considered as inputs to the Land Use/Open Space/Circulation Element. Of particular importance would be policies designed to preserve older neighborhoods where most of the reasonably priced units are located. The City is currently (February 1976) in the process of preparing or revising eight of the nine mandated elements of the General Plan. The more specialized elements, including the Housing Element, are to be completed and adopted first. The more comprehensive and development-oriented elements - Land Use, Open Space, and Circulation - are to be completed last as a combined report. This sequence will allow the goals, objectives and programs of the Housing Element to be considered as basic inputs in the preparation of the Land Use/Open Space/Circulation Element. Since the Housing Element has not recommended specific land uses for specific sites, there is little likelihood that conflicts will arise between the Housing Element and other elements. A review of the Housing Element after other elements are completed or amended will be made to determine if those elements require amendments to the Housing Element. The Housing Element reinforces consistency between elements by requiring that all new developments in the City:
- a. Discourage the use of the private automobile.
 - b. Provide for sound attenuation techniques in new structures where the Noise Element indicates this is needed.
 - c. Provide mitigating measures for safety problems where the Seismic Safety/Safety Element indicates this is needed.

6. To facilitate regular review of the Housing Element, the various sources of housing data within the City will be codified and made available to the general public on a regular basis.
7. To provide a sounder information base for HCDA planning, and updating of the Housing Element, new data will be generated by a mid-decade census, contingent upon financing.

D. OBSTACLES TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THESE OBJECTIVES

Political

1. Since many of these proposals are new to the Alameda housing market, there may be some resistance to their intent.
2. Measure A imposes a constraint upon some possible alternative forms of implementation techniques.

Economic

1. Alameda is a steady demand market with a restricted supply of suitable vacant land. There is little physical space for new development.
2. What open space exists is expensive to build upon. It is unlikely that this land can be used for people of low or moderate incomes unless some form of local, state or federal subsidy is proposed.
3. Existing houses and sites are expensive, with costs running ahead of real incomes. Without public action, housing opportunities, particularly for moderate-income households, will be reduced.

APPENDIX

SPECIFIC STAGES OF NEIGHBORHOOD DECLINE FOR ANALYZING RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Based upon George Sternlieb and James Hughes,
Analysis of Neighborhood Decline in Urban Areas.
(New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers Center
for Urban Policy Research, June 1973), xiii-xv.

Stage 1: Healthy and Viable Residential Neighborhoods.

These areas are thriving and relatively free from problems. They are viable because they continue to attract as new members (to replace those households moving out through normal turnover) additional households with high enough incomes and other resources to maintain the area in excellent condition. Such areas are of two types:

a. New Thriving Areas.

These are new or relatively new neighborhoods recently constructed both of single-family units and garden apartments or multi-family structures. The future evolution of neighborhoods of this type depends mainly upon the original cost range of their housing and the subsequent socioeconomic status of their occupants. Areas containing very high-cost new single-family housing and very low-cost new housing have the greatest tendencies to decline later. The former often decline because it is hard to find other buyers with high enough incomes to maintain large, expensive homes once the original occupants move out. The latter decline because low-income households have difficulty maintaining new homes in good condition over any long period of time. Intermediate-cost new housing has the best chance of being maintained without much decline. The number of other households with incomes equal to those of the original occupants is quite large, and those incomes

are sufficient to keep the area in good condition. Hence, as the original occupants move out through normal turnover, others move in who continue to maintain the area well.

b. Old Stable Areas.

These are older prestige neighborhoods with residents of high socioeconomic status. Such areas provide superior residential environments and exhibit excellent structural maintenance. Although high-quality public services are evident, these neighborhoods may lie in relatively central locations closer to expanding areas of blight than the newer neighborhoods in the first group.

Stage 2: Neighborhoods in Transition and Beginning Decline.

These are generally older areas undergoing functional change. The structures in them are often approaching functional obsolescence, and the social composition is changing. Examples of functional obsolescence are lots too narrow for adequate play-space, not enough off-street parking, inadequate electric wiring, and old-fashioned interior layouts and kitchens. As older families whose children are raised move out to housing of more manageable size, newer and less affluent households move in. Less spending is put into housing maintenance, so minor deficiencies begin to appear in the dwellings. The decline in socioeconomic status of the residents, their changing tastes, and the increased density of existing housing put increased pressure on the neighborhood infrastructure (that is, streets, sewer systems, and other physical amenities). Public services (such as waste collection, street cleaning, fire protection, police protection, and school quality) may decline.

Often, this stage includes substantial new construction and high population growth. But a high and increasing proportion of this new construction consists of apartments; so average densities rise significantly. Much of the apartment construction replaces older and larger single-family homes. Most areas in a region where this transitional process is evident are in the inner zones.

Stage 3: Downgrading Neighborhoods with Decline Clearly Underway.

In these areas, changes begun in Stage 2 become more obvious and well-defined. Interior deficiencies increase and minor structural deficiencies become very widespread. Decline in social status continues, causing entry by more lower-income households, while ethnic changes accelerate. Services become more and more inadequate to meet rising physical, environmental, and social needs. Housing occupancy is increasingly made up of renters rather than owners, and many more properties come under absentee ownership. The social and physical gulf between investors/owners and tenants widens; so there is less awareness of tenant problems. This leads to deteriorating tenant-landlord relationships and rising management and operating costs. Conversions to increased density and non-residential uses multiply, and overall confidence in each such area slackens. Minor problems become general, and service problems emerge and increase in proportion to the rapidity of change in each area.

State 4: Neighborhoods Thinning Out and Accelerating Into Major Decline.

In such areas, density and dwelling occupancy are gradually reduced. This may occur through a decline in household size, but it may also reflect the merging of dwelling units, demolition, vacancy, or abandonment. Thus, two key characteristics of this stage are little or no construction and a decline in population. Physical decline is found everywhere as housing becomes progressively deteriorated and dilapidated, with most structures in need of major repairs. This deterioration contributes to, and is reinforced by, a poor neighborhood physical environment, including dirty streets, vacant lots littered with junk, and many abandoned cars on streets and in yards. Further social shifts, particularly toward minority groups, make the neighborhood marketable only to those of the lowest socioeconomic rank able to make rental payments. As a result, cash flows to property owners eventually decline, and further strains are placed on the landlord-tenant relationship. The general household type is one existing at subsistence levels, and with many social problems. These problems are often so severe they threaten the general safety and well-being of the

local community. Pessimism about the neighborhood's future becomes deep and widespread.

Stage 5: Nonviable and Heavily Abandoned Neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods of this type have reached what amounts to a "terminal point." Abandonment becomes widespread, and expectations about their future are nil. Severe social problems and physical decline place these neighborhoods at the very bottom of the urban hierarchy. Their residents have the lowest social status, the least economic means, and the least leverage to improve the area of anyone in the entire region. Even these persons gradually abandon the worst units unless some new immigrant group of even lower status arrives. Landlords abandon those units too. This leaves gaps among the inhabited structures and emphasizes fears about the final nature of changes going on in each such area. Such fears in turn ultimately lead to abandonment of the remaining sound structures interspersed in this matrix of decline. All hope for the future of such neighborhoods becomes extinguished. Almost no households with enough resources to maintain property in good condition are willing to remain in, or move into, such areas - hence, they have become nonviable.

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